

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATTACKS OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, 5 years ago today, al-Qaida terrorists launched a brutal sneak attack on American soil. It was their deadliest attack ever and a day America will never forget.

Today, we remember and honor the innocent victims of that attack and stand in support of their families and communities.

We honor the heroic police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel who rushed into burning buildings when everyone else was rushing out.

We honor the valiant passengers of United Airlines Flight 93, who gave their lives to save thousands of others—including, quite possibly, many in the building in which we stand.

We honor millions of good-hearted volunteers who lined up to help their fellow Americans and donated time, money, blood, and literally everything they could.

We honor the families who opened their homes, the houses of worship that opened their doors, and the schoolchildren who saw evil for the first time but were not afraid to open their hearts.

We honor the military and law enforcement personnel whose vigilance has kept us from attack since that day. It is because of their service we have not been attacked at home in the 5 years since.

Some have made the ultimate sacrifice, and we honor their families, while realizing the debt can never be repaid.

As the country reflects on what happened that tragic day, we must remember this: Two skyscrapers may be gone, but 5 years after 9/11, America stands taller than ever.

America is on the offense against terrorists, and America is winning the war on terror. And thanks to hard and dangerous work over the last 5 years, today, America is safer. To make us safer still, we continue to wage war against terrorists who would harm America here and around the world. Of the senior terrorist leaders whom our Government has been tracking, many have been apprehended or killed, and we are disrupting the flow of money, supplies, people, and information to the terrorists.

But we must stay on the offensive. This Congress must ensure that the brave men and women fighting under our flag have everything they need to complete their mission. War is horror, and none of us want these heroes torn away from their homes and families. But we must confront the fundamental reality of 9/11. The enemy was at war with us for years prior to that attack. It was only on that day that we began to fight back with the effort necessary to beat this warped and virulent strain of radical Islam. And we will prevail over the toxic death wish that preaches indiscriminate killing of men, women,

and children in the Name of the Almighty.

Most importantly, all of us must do what we can to sustain the faith of our fellow citizens through this long and difficult war. When we began the fight after 9/11, we knew it would not be short, and we knew it would not be easy. In fact, this struggle will last years, perhaps decades. We cannot be sure when we will win, but we can be sure that we will win. We must sustain our faith because as long as we maintain our will to win, we will prevail.

Once before, America was the target of a surprise deadly attack. Two days after that attack, on December 9, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt addressed the Nation. Here is what he had to say:

When we resort to force, as now we must, we are determined that this force shall be directed toward ultimate good as well as against immediate evil. We Americans are not destroyers, we are builders. . . . We are going to win the war and we are going to win the peace that follows.

What was true then is truer today. We do not fight for death and destruction, as the terrorists do. We fight for liberty. That is America's greatest strength. And no terrorist attack will ever diminish it.

Five years ago today, Members of Congress from both parties and both Chambers stood united on the Capitol steps and sang "God Bless America." In the days that followed, our Nation witnessed a resurgence in unity and in purpose.

Voluntarism soared. American flags sold out of stores overnight. Just as we stood united here, the country stood united against a growing threat.

This evening, Members of Congress will return to the steps and join together to remember that day of resolve. And as we once again "swear allegiances to a land that's free," it is my sincere hope that we will reignite our united purpose.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will be a period for the transaction of morning business until 4 p.m. today.

The Senator from Montana.

PORT SECURITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to take a moment to recognize that today is the fifth anniversary of the September 11 attacks. That day 5 years ago changed the way we all think about the world. The consequences were profound. We learned that we must be prepared for threats we cannot even imagine.

That is why our work here today on the Port Security Improvement Act is so important. I was pleased to help write the Port Security Improvement Act of 2006, the amendment before the

Senate today. I am proud of our work. Working together, we have crafted legislation to help keep our ports safe and our economy strong. The legislation strikes a balance. It protects Americans, and it preserves the free flow of commerce upon which our prosperity depends.

Last year, nearly 11 million containers came into our country. That is more than 30,000 containers every day. They arrive at more than 300 ports all across our borders. That number of containers is expected to double over the next 3 years. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency is responsible for ensuring that not one of those millions of containers—not one—carries with it anything that could harm us. It is a daunting task. It would be tempting to say we should slow this torrent of containers to a trickle. It would be tempting to say we should allow Customs and Border Protection unlimited time to do its job to protect us from harm, but slowing trade to a trickle would also cause America great harm. It would cripple our economy.

Ensuring security is only half of the work of Customs and Border Protection. The agency is also charged with carrying on the centuries-old responsibility of its predecessor, the U.S. Customs Service, to facilitate the commerce so critical to keeping our economy strong.

Cross-border trade accounts for fully a quarter of the American economy—one-quarter. How, then, do we keep this flow of trade both safe and smooth? I believe this legislation tries to do just that. We have given Customs and Border Protection more tools and resources to accomplish both of its missions.

We authorize \$1.2 billion in port security grant assistance, and we authorize another \$750 million for key programs such as the Container Security Initiative and the automated targeting system.

We also authorize funds to fulfill the promise of the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism. We provide the personnel to validate supply chain security for the thousands of American importers eager to participate in the program and keep their cargo moving.

I also strongly support testing and deployment of fully integrated container scanning systems capable of increasing the security of containers in foreign ports while maintaining or improving the processing time of just-in-time cargoes. The more we can know about a container before it gets to America, the safer we all will be.

But technology is not a panacea. We need people at our land and seaports to detect and deter contraband or unlawful persons from entering our country. My State of Montana is a border State. In Montana, we have new cargo examination equipment, but we don't have new personnel to run it.

We need people to ensure the robust enforcement of our trade laws and trade agreements upon which American companies and workers rely. That

is why, in the 2002 Homeland Security Act, Congress prohibited any diminution in Customs trade facilitation and enforcement functions. And we prohibited any reduction or consolidation of the personnel performing those functions.

In violation of that act, personnel dedicated to revenue collection and trade enforcement are increasingly being asked to assist with port security-related functions for which they are neither trained nor equipped. Since 2003, trade personnel numbers decreased by as much as 15 percent.

This legislation reverses this damaging trend by requiring Customs and Border Protection to restore personnel vital to its commercial mission. At the same time, we ensure sufficient numbers of security-focused personnel by adding uniformed officers at every one of our Nation's ports. We can do both, and we need to do both.

The legislation also creates an Office of International Trade within Customs and Border Protection. The new office would be headed by an Assistant Commissioner for International Trade, reporting directly to the Commissioner.

This office is responsible for supervising and giving policy direction to employees before the agency's commercial and revenue functions. This structural change is designed to give voice to the concerns of commerce. It will guarantee that the concerns of commerce receive due consideration.

And an International Trade Policy Committee within Customs and Border Protection will assist the Commissioner in coordinating with the Assistant Secretary for Policy. The committee will help them implement policies related to the commercial customs and trade facilitation functions within the Agency.

Mr. President, if security at our ports is compromised, then the international trade that drives our Nation's economy could grind to a halt. But if security at our ports does not protect the overall health of the international commerce system, then that would not provide Americans real security. We need to do both.

I am very pleased with the legislation before us. We still need to address other critical transportation security issues, such as rail and transit security, which this legislation doesn't do. But the pending amendment is a critical component of a national strategy on homeland and economic security.

This legislation would not have been completed without the tireless efforts of my colleagues. I thank and commend Senator INOUE, Senator STEVENS especially for his very helpful work, MURRAY, COLLINS, LIEBERMAN, COLEMAN, and my dear friend, the chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator GRASSLEY.

Too many staff to name have worked countless hours to get this legislation ready, and I thank them.

Working together, I believe we have created something that both safe-

guards our Nation's ports and protects American prosperity. America needs us to do both. That is why America needs us to pass this important legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine is recognized.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, 5 years ago, our Nation experienced one of its darkest days and finest hours. With shocking suddenness, an act of unparalleled cruelty transformed the late-summer morning of uncommon brilliance into one of unfathomable horror. On that awful morning, September 11 was transformed from a mere point on the calendar into an eternal monument to the deepest human emotions of loss, of sacrifice, and of resolve.

We pause today to remember those whose lives were taken that terrible morning—2,996 innocent men, women, and children, workers doing their jobs, travelers embarking on trips. Men and women like Robert and Jacqueline Norton of Lubec, ME boarded Flight 11 to celebrate a son's wedding in California. In the days just before the trip, the Nortons planted new raspberry bushes in their garden and Robert, at age 85, helped repair the concrete steps at their church.

At age 85, Robert Norton was the oldest to perish that day. At age 2, Christine Hanson of Groton, MA, was the youngest. She was traveling with her parents to that place of childhood dreams, Disneyland. The aircraft that was to take the Hanson family on their dream vacation instead was driven into the North Tower. There, on the 92nd floor, were John and Sylvia Resta of Queens, NY. They worked together and on September 11th they died together. Resta was seven months pregnant.

The Pentagon that morning was filled with men and women who had dedicated their lives to serving their country. Among them was Commander Robert Schlegel. After his 1981 graduation from Gray-New Gloucester High School in Maine, he went to college, married his high-school sweetheart, Dawn, and followed a tradition set by his father and two brothers by joining the United States Navy. His 15-year Naval career was one of achievement and courage. Among his many commendations were the Meritorious Service Medal, four Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medals, and the Purple Heart. Shortly before September 11, he had been promoted to the rank of Commander. His new office, on the second floor of the Pentagon, believed to be the point of impact of Flight 77.

Each of these names, and the names of so many more, represent lives of accomplishment, contribution, and promise. Each loss leaves a wound in the hearts of families and friends that can never be fully healed.

But September 11 was not just a day of personal tragedy. It was an attack

on the United States, an attack on freedom, an attack on civilization. We must never forget what was lost, and what remains at stake.

We also pause today to remember the heroes whose courage saved countless lives then, and who continue to inspire us. Yamel Merino, of Yonkers, NY, was described by colleagues as the perfect EMT. She gave her life while helping the injured near the World Trade Center when the first tower collapsed.

After an outstanding career with the FBI, John O'Neill became head of security for the World Trade Center. He exited the building safely after the first of the two hijacked planes hit, but re-entered when he saw the extent of the damage and the danger to others. He saved lives, but could not save himself.

After his safe exit from the Pentagon, Staff Sergeant Christopher Braman rushed back into the burning building, returning again and again to find survivors and to carry them to safety. He stayed on the scene for the next 3 days, working past exhaustion, saving lives with the search and rescue skills the U.S. Army had taught him.

In the days and weeks immediately following the attacks, we were moved by the selfless courage of the men and women—passengers and crew—aboard Flight 93. By wresting control of that aircraft from the terrorists, they knowingly gave their lives so that others might live. Todd Beamer's Let's Roll! became our Nation's rallying cry.

Last month, additional recordings of emergency calls made that terrible morning were released. One contains a statement that describes with eloquent simplicity the spirit of September 11. Amid the suffocating smoke, searing flames, and falling debris of the South Tower, the last words Fire Captain Patrick Brown spoke from the 35th floor to the outside world were these: "We're still heading up."

We may never know where the courage to keep heading up into such danger comes from. We must always honor it. We must never forget.

As we pledge to never forget what was lost and what was given on September 11, we must in the same breath pledge to do all that we can to prevent future attacks. We can offer no guarantee, but that must be our goal.

The fundamental obligation of Government is to protect its people. Since September 11, we have done much to meet that obligation. Immediately after the attacks, we passed legislation to close the gap between law enforcement and intelligence that the terrorists exploited. The reauthorization signed into law earlier this year makes permanent many provisions from the original law that are important to protect Americans from terrorists. Equally important, it contains significant new safeguards that protect the civil liberties we cherish but that the terrorists despise.

We created the Department of Homeland Security to provide a unifying